

**Chair Grijalva**  
**NPFPL Hearing – Statement and Questions**  
**June 23, 2022**

- Thank you, Subcommittee Chair Neguse, for allowing me to join today's conversation.
- And thank you to the witnesses for sharing your expertise with us.
- I also want to commend you, Mr. Chair, on your opening remarks today.
- It is important that we keep in mind the broader context of today's conversation.
- Our colleagues across the aisle have much to say about what isn't being done.
- But, in my estimation, their solutions boil down to giving industry free reign.
- No environmental protections, no check on corporate greed, no public process or expert input.
- That strategy sounds good, but in practice, it would bring us back to the smog, clear cuts, and burning rivers of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

- Instead, we need to move forward, and that's exactly what Democrats are trying to do.
- Earlier this week, the President acted to ensure our wildland firefighters are paid for the necessary service they provide.
- Service for which all Americans owe them a debt of gratitude.
- Last week, we voted to lower food and fuel prices to address the global crisis of inflation.
- We also should not look past one of our biggest accomplishments: Democrats worked with the President to pass the largest infrastructure bill in history.
- We secured billions in funding to address wildfires and to restore healthy ecosystems.
- Every Republican on this Committee voted against that effort.

- Committee Democrats know that we aren't going to meet the problem of climate change by moving backwards.
- We need to meet the challenge head on, with bold, ambitious policies, and I think we have done that. We continue to do that.
- But I can tell you firsthand, simply opening our resources to industry won't work.
- Right now, in Arizona we're dealing with a growing fire threat in my district.
- This is desert land, not a timber tree in site.
- There is no commercial timber option. This isn't because of environmental reviews.
- The climate is changing. We're in extreme drought, facing extreme heat, and the fire season is a fire year.
- We can only address these threats through the bold, ambitious investments Democrats are making in our public lands and in community protection.

- We have to prepare for a climate changed future, and we don't do that by removing environmental protections.
- I urge my colleagues to join us in that effort.

## **Questions**

### **Panel I**

Mr. Lambrecht, you are the Director of the National Conservation Lands, a system which encompasses some of our most pristine and sensitive landscapes that I was proud to help codify over a decade ago. These are the crown jewels of public land managed by BLM. How do conservation protections like those we are considering today help to protect communities and the climate?

Mr. Lambrecht, how does additional funding for ecosystem restoration, like that included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, support climate protections?

### **Panel II**

Ms. Virgil, you note that Ms. Leger Fernandez's bills has support from ranchers, hunters, and anglers. Why do you think such a broad coalition wants to see this area protected?